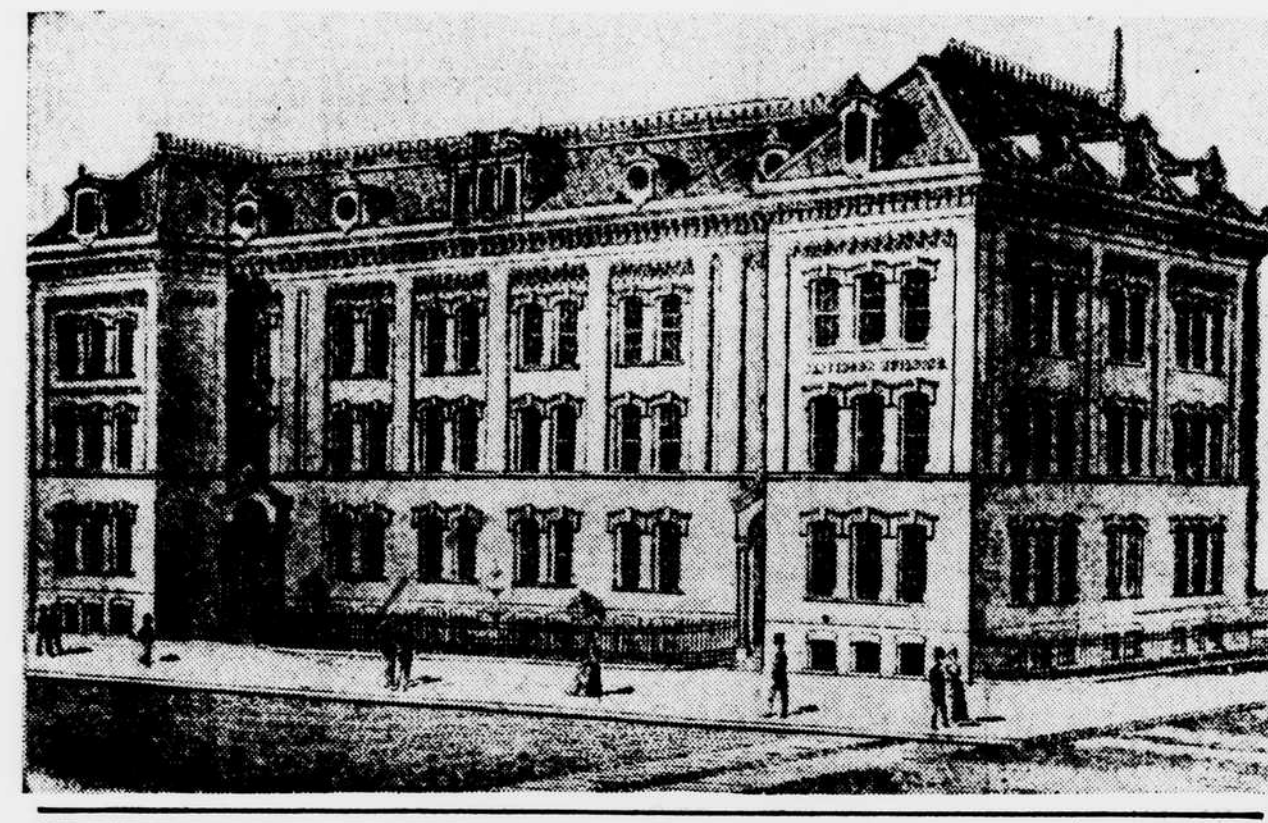


Washington's First Children's Christmas Club Had Leadership of The Star



The Jefferson Public School in Southwest, where the third district gave its Christmas entertainment for children in 1883. In the center above is an old picture from Harper's Magazine, showing how Santa Claus came to Washington in the early days.

ANNUAL EVENT NOW INSTITUTION

Initial Celebration for Children Was Held in 1883, With Enthusiastic Citizens Giving Aid to New and Unprecedented Assembling of Guests for Feast and Entertainment

By John Clagett Proctor.

The Christmas party for 1938, sponsored by The Star, Warner Bros. and the National Broadcasting Co., actively assisted by the Metropolitan Police Department, the Parent-Teacher Association and others, will undoubtedly prove as great a success this year as the party has in years gone by, and thousands of children will have their little hearts gladdened, and in many instances their parents will be taken care of, too, by way of food and clothing, through the good work done in their behalf by those who have undertaken this wonderfully charitable work. In order to spread the spirit and glad tidings of Christmas over the entire District of Columbia, even into the humblest of homes.

The Warner Bros. and the National Broadcasting Co. are comparatively newcomers in this laudable work, but their assistance has certainly been of an indispensable character. The Star and the Police Department are old-timers in providing help and assistance for the worthy residents of Washington, not only during this particular season, but upon other occasions as well, when there has been dire need for aid and support.

It might be of interest to know, in this connection, that the first Christmas club of any importance ever organized in this city resulted from an editorial and an article appearing in The Star of December 1, 1882. First, let us read the editorial that appeared that date. It stated:

"A cool-headed, warm-hearted business citizen asks The Star to call the special attention of its readers to the article on another page, entitled 'The Children's Christmas Club.' Nothing that we can say would add force to his argument. There are many little ones in our midst who have no share in the dear Christmas cheer. To them Christmas is only a name when their own misery is forced more bitterly upon them by contrast with happiness of others.

"Can anything be sadder than the wistful look on the faces of these children as they gaze into the shop windows, or listen on the pavement outside to the Christmas music and rejoicings in happy homes? Surely we cannot think of this without wanting to do something to change it—to give these little ones at least one happy day in the long, cruel year.

"No doubt the Washington children will come forward as promptly and generously as did those of Portland; their elders will not be found backward to supplement and support their efforts, but above all, let the children learn the pleasure and the good that comes not so much from giving as sharing. Let us all go back and read again about Scrooge and Marley and Tiny Tim, and then, although the eloquent lips are mute which used to plead every Christmas for the poor, his voice will reach us yet.

"And now for the practical part: It may not be feasible, in so large a city as Washington, to accomplish the desired result with one club; it may be best to form one for each of certain districts, or to have the various Sunday schools act in the matter. We matter again during the coming week to receive written suggestions upon the subject, and these, or the plan most generally approved, will be published in next Saturday's Star. 'And so,' as Tiny Tim observed, 'God bless us every one!'

The article that the 'cool-headed, warm-hearted' business citizen asked be published, was on another page of The Star. It took up two columns, and the writer can only say that it was written by Ella S. Sargent, and was entitled, 'Children's Christmas Club,' being suggested by a club organized in Portland, Me., December 10, 1882, substantially along the same lines followed in the formation of the Washington Christmas Clubs of 1883.

The Saturday following the printing of The Star's editorial several clubs had already been formed. Indeed, so eagerly was the suggestion received that on the following day after the editorial appeared, on Sunday, December 2, the first of the several clubs formed was started at a meeting of the officers and teachers of the Swedenborgian Sunday School, which then met at North Capitol and B streets, now a part of the Capitol Grounds. The children of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church soon followed, agreeing to give up their usual Christmas festivities for the benefit of the poor children in the Northwest section of the city. R. Ross Perry, one of Washington's distinguished lawyers, was made president of the church club. Miss West, daughter of District Commissioner Joseph Rodman West, and Miss Waite, daughter of Chief Justice Waite, also formed a club, which had among its members Miss Nellie Arthur, daughter of President Chester A. Arthur.

In two weeks' time after the start had been made of assistance were pouring into The Star office and to the several Christmas club committees. The Union Veteran Corps tendered its armory, then in Masonic Hall, but a similar offer having been received from the National Rifles, and accepted, the offer of the Veteran Corps was not accepted. Ed. Abner, the restaurateur, not only offered his hall on E street, between Seventh and Eighth streets, gratis, but also agreed to supply all the service for the festival free of expense to the club.

O. G. Staples, then proprietor of Willard's Hotel, tendered the use of the Willard Hall, which stood to the west of the southwest corner of Fourteenth and F streets. Lincoln Hall was also offered, free of rent, by A. S. Pratt & Son.

Soon Christmas clubs were being formed all over the city, vying with each other to render the best possible service. The children of Capitol Hill and the Navy Yard met at the Wallach School and selected William E. Hutchinson as leader. In South Washington, known as the third district of the Children's Christmas Club, the children met at the Jefferson School and School Trustee William H. Baum was selected as president. William A. Gordon of the first district called a meeting to be held at the Curtis Building, Georgetown, and another meeting of the second district was held in the Franklin School.

The Committee on Invitations seems to have been the big committee, and it was the duty of the second district, who have "no Christmas at home," to send their names and addresses to Crosby S. Noyes, chairman, at The Star office. Judge Arthur MacArthur is also mentioned as one to whom offers of turkeys, etc., might be sent, at his address, Twelfth and N streets N.W.

The result of this appeal to the people of Washington 55 years ago bore wonderful fruit, and when Christmas came that year nearly 1,500 children were well provided for in the four districts into which the city was divided. The District of Columbia had a population then of about one-fourth its present number, so that any comparison that might be made should be made with this difference in mind, and the further fact that it was the first of its kind in Washington.

But in addition to the 1,500 children mentioned there were fully 500 sick children and children physically or otherwise unable to attend, to whom packages of toys, Christmas substantial and even luxuries were sent.

As stated, for the purpose of carrying out The Star's idea of December 1, 1883, as prompted by the report of the doings of the Portland, Me., Christmas Club, the District of Columbia was separated into four districts. District No. 1 had its party in the Curtis School Building, on O street between Wisconsin avenue and Thirty-third street, in the heart of old Georgetown. This public schoolhouse was erected in 1875 and from the first, space was also provided in it for the Peabody Library and the Linthicum Institute, and the property is still being used in the same way—as a sort of joint venture.

Here, on December 28, 200 children were made happy, many, no doubt, for the first time in their lives. And, as The Star said at the time: "Turkey, chicken, pastry, sauces, cake and fruit were dealt out with a liberal hand, every child being served by the busy ladies who had charge of this section with all asked for, yet provisions were left on hand and afterward sent to the Aged Woman's Home. The committee of ladies in charge of this part of the program comprised the following: Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Downman, Miss Woodward, Mrs. and Miss Moore, Mrs. Zeiler, Mrs. Whelan, Miss Janney, Mrs. Sawyer, Mrs. Patten, Mrs. and Miss Nourse, Miss Dodge and Miss Jackson.

"The little ones were then conducted to the hall, where a large Christmas tree was placed upon the platform, and became the center of attraction; nearby was an open fireplace and chimney, down which came Kris Kringle, rosy and frosty from his long journey.

"Each child's name was called from the cards, and the first present that came to hand handed over as the little one responded. An ice cream bowl full of candy was also presented to each. All the toys were new. Being wrapped up in packages, few knew what prizes they had drawn until they opened them. It was curious to watch them as they received their presents, the most not opening their bundles until they left the hall, as if they

enjoyed the anticipation and wanted to prolong it.

"The investigations were carried on at the first convenient doorstep, and formed interesting scenes, enjoyed by the passers-by.

"The ladies in charge of the Christmas tree were Mrs. J. T. Mitchell, Miss Bertha Mitchell, Miss Della Jackson, Mrs. F. L. Moore, Miss Sarah Brooke, Miss Ella Cunningham, Mrs. M. McGowan and Miss Bessie McGowan. The committee of gentlemen was as follows: Josiah Dent, J. T. Mitchell, F. L. Moore, C. M. Matthews, W. A. Gordon, assisted by J. H. Gordon.

It is quite likely that the Miss Della Jackson is none other than Miss Cordelia Jackson, still residing in Georgetown, where her father, Richard P. Jackson, lived and died, and where he wrote his well-known 'Chronicle' of that part of the District of Columbia. Miss Jackson, like her father, has a mind for the historic, and is still writing interestingly of her old home town.

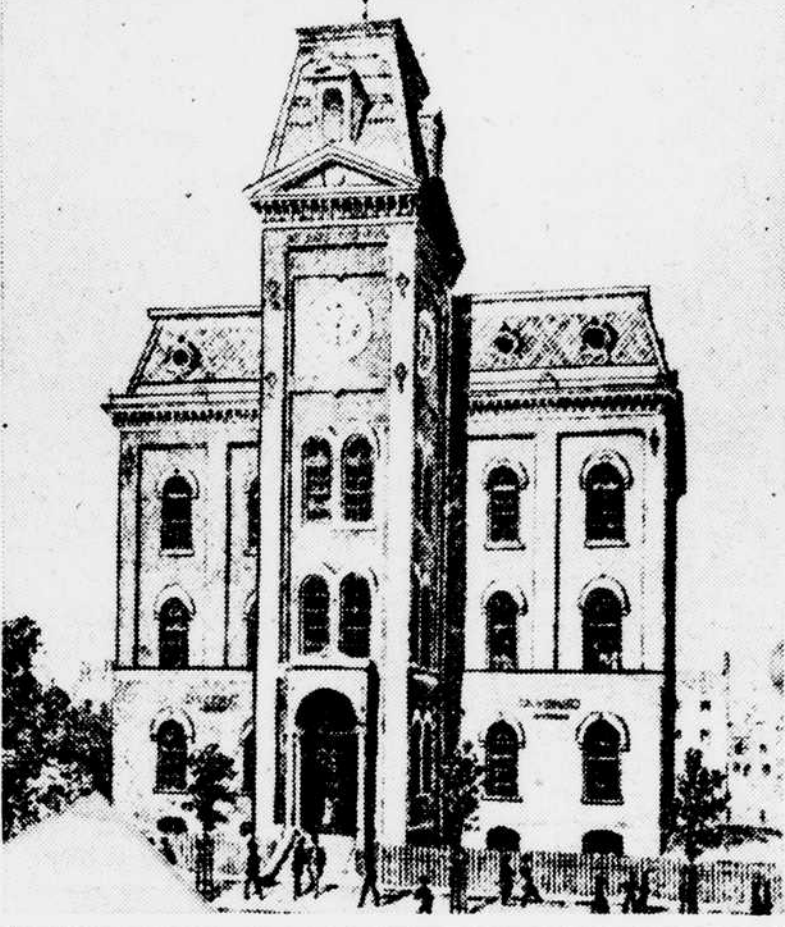
Five hundred and more children of the second district were entertained at the National Rifles Ar-

mory, 920 G street, then a new building. Says The Star: "There was no confusion or disorder. The children, who were received as guests, arrived on time, were given their proper place, ate a good dinner, then were marched in order to the hall upstairs, where, with their entertainers, they enjoyed an amusing program, and after receiving presents of toys and candies were sent to their homes, with nothing to mar the pleasure of the afternoon.

"It was amusing, and then again pathetic, to see them eat. One boy dashed in with all the ardor of a real, hungry, growing youngster, and in a twinkling he had his plate clean as a whistle, made way with a fresh supply and was doing great execution with a third plate before his neighbors had hardly begun. Others ate gingerly, as if they wanted to make it last as long as possible, not seeming to be able to grasp the unaccustomed idea that there was really plenty more. Some of the little ones were so excited by all the strange things about them

that they lost their appetites and could eat but little."

The members of the committee of this district who waited on the tables included the following girls: Ella Ramsdell, Louise Shaw, Hattie Blaine, Maud E. Noyes, Agnes Beach, Maud Noble, Hattie James, Mathilde O'Toole, Jennie Reese, Eleanor Sicard, Mary Sherman, Susie Walker, Carrie Gibbs, Mabel Hemenway, Nellie Stinemetz, Byrnia Clarke, Lucetta Stockbridge, Lizzie King, Janie Gibson, Mary King, Susie Dawson, Ethel Hall, Ruth M. Sites, Bessie Copenhaver, Marie Smith, Mary Howe, Rena Smith, Bessie Casey, Edith Caruth, Helen Monroe, Josie Perry, Nan Hudson, Edith Horne and Blanche Wales.



The Curtis School Building in Washington, where the Christmas dinner was served in 1883, is seen above. The upper right picture is an early Christmas scene around old Center Market, 1888.

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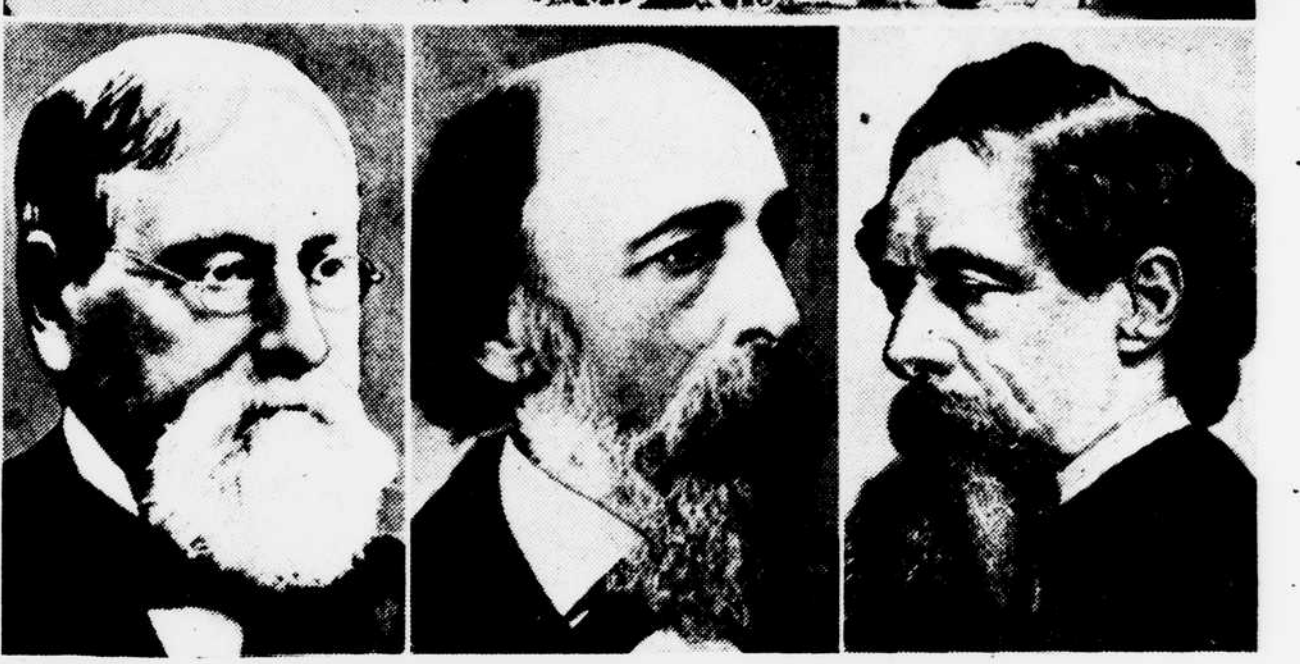
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The boys who assisted were: Morton Ramsdell, Charlie McKenney, Edward Whitmore, Brook Baker, Richard Johnson, Seymour Carter, Fred. Riggles, James Cheeseman, J. King, W. H. Tappan, Lester Davis, Willie Kind, Arthur Merritt, Jessie Lee, Charles Timms, Louis Clephane, William Hodge, R. D. Weaver, George Howard, Horace Wylie, Walter Willard, Thomas C. Noyes, L. C. Gannell, Charlie Stone, Frank Reeves, Charles Gray, Charles Ruggles and Charles Sawtelle.



CROSBY S. NOYES, Founder of the first children's Christmas Club in Washington in 1883.

APPLETON P. CLARK, Jr., Who made the exercises in the fourth district a success.

CHARLES DICKENS, Whose 'A Christmas Carol' has been read for many years.

MUSIC OF BELLS IS MOST STIRRING AT CHRISTMAS TIME

Legend Gives Them Character as Soul of Music Brought to Earth for Benefit of All Nations

By Blanche Syfret McKnight.

From the towers of Washington's churches the music of the bells is pealing forth this Christmastide, ringing out a joyful reminder that on this day a child was born, who, in manhood, gave a far-reaching philosophy to the peoples of the earth. Love thy fellow man! Let the bells of Washington ring out peace on earth, good will to men!

Had you ever stopped to think that there is magic in bells, magic in their music, magic in their very metal? There is an old legend which says the music of bells was part of the mysteries of heaven. Up beyond the starry sky they were the harp of sound, in reality God's harp, but at such a height they could not speak to the souls of men and so they came to earth, created in bronze.

The early mission fathers in California knew their magic, for centuries ago the priests summoned their flocks to worship by the loud-ringing harmonies of the oak-hung bell.

Pioneers of Washington, too, early came under the spell and power of bells and hung them in massive oaks as a signal for warning and impending danger. Out in Rock Creek Cemetery an ancient bell still hangs in the famous "Glebe Oak." And the caretaker at the cemetery will tell you that before St. Paul's parish was built the old bell was used not only to call the early settlers to worship, but to warn them of hostile Indians.

The first bell hung in a belfry in Washington is found in historic St. John's Church on Lafayette square. In December, 1822, issue of the Theological Review, Dr. Hawley, one time rector of St. John's, has this to say: "On November 3, 1822, the bell of St. John's was rung for the first time, and is the first bell in the city of Washington to call a Christian congregation to worship."

The old bell at St. John's has seen many Presidents come and go, and it likewise has tolled for every President of the United States who died while he was President.

Seated each day at the organ in the chancel of Epiphany at a keyboard a little more than an octave long, Adolf Torovsky, organist and bell ringer, induces Washingtonians and visitors alike to pause in the midst of their workaday world and reflect on the message of the bells. As played by his master hand it is little wonder that the compelling tones stir the emotions of even the most calloused of Washingtonians, very souls of those who hear the old, familiar hymns.

That the chimes of Epiphany are a warmly appreciated daily messenger of peace and solace to patients at George Washington University Hospital and persons in all walks of life is evidenced by the many telephone calls and letters of appreciation received by the bell master at Epiphany.

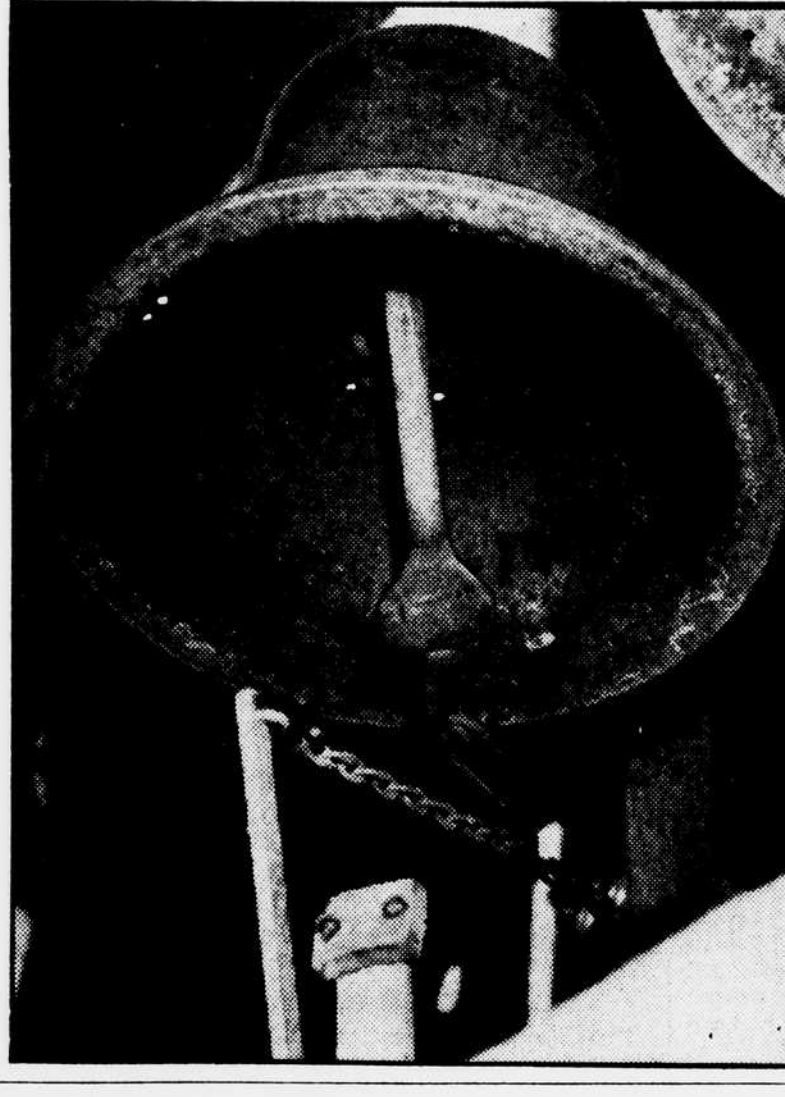
When President Harding died Epiphany's chimes ringer tolled the bells 58 times, once for each year of his life, and also played some of the Chief Executive's favorite hymns.

The chimes in Epiphany's soaring tower were dedicated in May, 1922, as a memorial to the late Rev. Randolph H. McKim, rector of the church from 1888 to 1920. The largest of his hands were made of 4,300 pounds, bears the inscription "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

Adolf Torovsky stresses the fact that the chimes in Epiphany are American-made bells, having been cast by the oldest bell foundry in the country. They are now electrically equipped.

It was learned that in a well-tuned chime, or carillon, which is the highest type of bell music, every bell must be in perfect tune with all the other tones of bells in the scale, and that every bell must be in perfect tune with itself. "In tune with itself." What nonsense, says you will say. But did you know that a good bell, when struck, sounds at least five different tones or notes; if there are five tones sounding, then they must each be in harmony with each of the other tones that are in that one bell. Perhaps it is still sounds complicated—in truth, the process of tuning a bell is a complicated, scientific and costly one, and was regarded many centuries ago as a secret.

There are several old, reliable and well-known bell foundries in the United States, and many persons feel that our bells are not only equal, but are superior, to foreign bells. One person expressed it, "the only reason that we can see why enjoyed the chimes and often expressed his pleasure at hearing them. Judge James L. Norris, patent attorney, who lived near the church, ordered his colored butler to bring a



and other churches in Washington ring out glad tidings there will be at least one thing in the city in whose memory the bells of the old Metropolitan Memorial Church on John Marshall place will ring.

In fancy, Mr. Richard H. Johnston, librarian, Bureau of Railway Economics, Association of American Railroads, and formerly bell ringer at the old Metropolitan Church, will climb the tower, and how he will make the bells ring out!

Thinking back, he says that bells in those days were not easy to play, and often his hands were numb with cold from pulling the ropes. "Another thing I had to contend with," he remarked, "was the presence of large bats and pigeons in the tower, that seemed to think the tower and bells were built especially for them. Each day I had to chase them away, usually with an old tennis racket, kept close at hand."

But the joy received from playing the bells far outweighed the inconveniences, Mr. Johnston said. "President McKinley, who attended services at the Metropolitan, thoroughly enjoyed the chimes and often expressed his pleasure at hearing them. Judge James L. Norris, patent attorney, who lived near the church, ordered his colored butler to bring a

chair into the yard every evening as I played the bells, and there the judge sat in awe and reverence until the music ceased. Before his death he requested that I play the chimes at his funeral, and when the judge passed on the old butler climbed the tower and handed me a \$10 gold piece his faithful master had left for me."

The tower and the chimes at the old Metropolitan were dedicated on Thanksgiving Day, 1871. The chimes were the gift of several individuals, among them Julia Dent Grant, who, with President Grant, attended services there during his administration. Each bell is inscribed with the name of the donor, and some of them with appropriate quotations from the Scriptures.

A fine set of Westminster chimes is found in the Lincoln Memorial Tower of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. The largest of the bells bears this inscription: "To the glory of God, in memory of Abraham Lincoln, who worshipped in this church while President of the United States. The set of bells was presented by Mary Lincoln Isham, February 12, 1929, New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, D. C."

Mrs. Isham of Washington, recently deceased, was the daughter of Robert Todd Lincoln, eldest son of

Washington's Chimes and Those Which Have Aroused Great Admiration in Various Other Lands

the martyr President. Her mother, Mrs. Mary Todd Lincoln, gave the tower at the New York Avenue Church that replaced the church's spire, blown down in a storm at the close of the last century. Both the steeple and the chimes were dedicated at the same time.

St. Mary's Catholic Church, 725 Fifth street N.W., has a splendid set of Westminster chimes. Installed by the parish in 1921, these bells may also be rung as a peal, the four striking in unison. They are rung on solemn occasions and at midnight on Christmas and New Year Eve. St. Mary's parish was founded in 1845 and the present church erected in 1890.

In all centuries and countries, for all classes and creeds, bells have had a far-reaching and romantic part in the lives of the people, and the custom of ringing a joyous peal of bells on Christmas morning has been for ages a beloved feature of the Christmas celebration, but, as in everything else, to keep abreast of modern times the style of ringing and the shape or form of a bell has changed. Today we have the streamlined or tubular bells, cast of the finest and purest bell metal.

These tubular chimes, which are becoming more numerous in Washington churches, are all operated on the same principle, although some are struck direct, while others strike a bakelite tip or some like substance. A set of these chimes consists of a series of tubular bells, usually about an inch in diameter, and for each tone there is a corresponding chime action, which is connected electrically to the keyboard, the organ console, the automatic player, or other device by which the chimes are operated.

A most interesting set of tubular chimes is in Christ Episcopal Church, Washington parish, in Southeast Washington, the oldest church in the District of Columbia.

The rector, the Rev. Edward Gabler, played the organ and chimes for us. The chimes are an integral part of the organ equipment, and as their sweet, clear and soothing tones blended with the pianissimo harmony of the organ, a total effect was created that beggars even the most accomplished powers of description. The Rev. Mr. Gabler also played the chimes from a separate keyboard, which is entirely independent of the organ. We were amazed at the control by which the chimes are operated. At times the music was reduced to a mere whisper and again increased to a mighty and inspiring volume.

The bells in Christ Church are the largest amplified chimes yet to be placed in any church. Under favorable circumstances they can be heard for about a mile in every di-

rection. They are played at 9:30 and 10:45 a.m. each Sunday; 6:30 and 10:30 a.m. Christmas day, and at 11 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year Eve.

The chimes for this 143-year-old church, where Monroe, Jefferson and Madison attended services, were installed in May of this year. They were given in memory of Alton P. White by his widow and sons and the organ console and the amplifiers in the church steeple are in memory of James and Ella H. Berry, who were devoted to the parish.

Out on Sixteenth street the modern chimes in the tower of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints are ringing today. The chimes were installed in 1933 and are a part of the organ equipment.

The set of tubular chimes in the bell tower of the Little Sanctuary in Washington Cathedral City, were installed in 1907, the gift of Mr. and Mrs. George S. Bowdoin of New York City, in memory of Fannie Bowdoin and Fannie Hamilton Kingsford.

The chimes are played daily by volunteers from students of St. Albans, the National Cathedral School for Boys. No special musical knowledge is necessary, as there are eight bell ropes and the chimes are played not by notes, but by numbers.

The playing of the chimes is under the general direction of Stephen A. Huribut, instructor at St. Albans School, who is a noted hymnologist. They are played at 8:30 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. before chapel services in the Little Sanctuary. At the present time there are five or six chimes ringers who alternate their services.

A chime ringer's prize is awarded yearly to the volunteer who has been most faithful to his duties and displayed the greatest amount of ability in the ringing of the chimes.

The pulling of the ropes by the students at Mount St. Albans is reminiscent of the "Society of College Youths," an organization in England said to have been founded on November 5, 1637, and probably the oldest existing company of chime ringers. Dick Whittington, who "turned back" at the sound of St. Mary-le-Bow's bells, to be thrice Lord Mayor of London, is credited with starting English gentry to ringing with a zeal that has never abated.

The important part which the church bell has played in the lives of Catholics throughout the world is perhaps best shown by the number of ways in which bells are used at the internationally known Franciscan Monastery.

Here chimes call the people to worship before all principle services, which, of course, accounts for their ringing out today to commemorate the birth of Christ.

Perhaps—in some respects at least—President Arthur was one of our most democratic Presidents, for he mingled considerably with the public, and in view of the fact that he followed in office the lamented Garfield, who died by the hand of an assassin, this might be looked upon as unusual. And so, not only was his daughter actively interested in this first Christmas Club, but he himself took a seat and remained an interested spectator for some time. Miss Arthur, his daughter, who wore a white lace sash, as president of the club, entered with zest into all the arrangements for entertaining the children. She sang in the chorus and helped distribute the presents to the guests. "Her unaffected manners and interest in all that was being done," to quote the press, "illustrated the spirit which animated the entire club."

In South Washington, where were the headquarters of the third district, an unusual complication arose. Here the Christmas Club got off to a bad start, but through strenuous and heroic efforts of the adult members of the community, everything worked out successfully in the end. However, it was not found advisable to hold the dinner in the manner followed by the other clubs, because, as The Star puts it:

"Many of the children sought to be benefited were sick, and would be unable to attend a dinner party. Another was that though the parents of many of the children are poor, yet they would not like to have their children classed among the poor and needy in a public way; but the main objection was the fact that there are many Catholic families among the worthy poor of South Washington."